



## ***Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks***

### **MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT**

To: Interested Parties

From: MFWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, May 3 through May 16, 2008

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It can be found at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>.

#### **Wolf Monitoring Activities**

At the end of 2007, the Montana wolf population was estimated at a minimum of 422 wolves, 73 packs and 39 Breeding Pairs according the federal recovery criteria. The 2008 Montana Wolf Program Annual Report along with other monitoring information can be found on the FWP wolf page.

Smucker (FWP seasonal) is currently running traps on private land for the Brooks Creek pack on the west side of the Bitterroot Valley south of Missoula.

Laudon has been trapping in Glacier National Park.

Monitoring flights were conducted on May 5<sup>th</sup> in southwest Montana and on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> in western Montana.

#### **Wolf - Livestock Activities**

From May 5 to May 9, 2 incidents involving wolf/dog attacks were reported to FWP. A landowner up Skalkaho Creek reported his husky/wolf cross dog attacked by 4 wolves. The dog

needed stitches but survived. A black lab was also reported killed last week in the Iron Camp area, but has not been investigated.

On the 4<sup>th</sup>, WS captured and collared a yearling female wolf (SW 315), a member of the Willow Creek pack. Efforts capture and collar the remaining uncollared adult wolf in the Willow Creek pack and leave this wolf, the breeding female, and the pups of the year. WS will also continue efforts to remove all uncollared yearling wolves from this pack. In the meantime, FWP has continued to meet with a small group of landowners on whose land this pack spends a lot of time to get a rider program underway this grazing season.

On the 6<sup>th</sup>, WS captured and collared a yearling wolf from the Elevation Mtn pack near Helmville and FWP has increased monitoring efforts there as part of the response to cattle losses on private property near Helmville. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, WS confirmed another calf was killed by wolves on private property near Helmville. Three calves have now been confirmed killed and 1 probable in the last several weeks. Control is ongoing to remove 3 wolves from the Elevation Mtn pack. Wildlife Services killed a young male wolf from the Willow Creek pack as part of ongoing control on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

By the 5<sup>th</sup>, a total of 4 wolves were removed that had been involved in killing cattle on private land south of Ennis. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, WS confirmed another dead calf on the same ranch. While out, WS confirmed the presence of 4 more wolves in the group in the same area where previously only 2 had been authorized. WS contacted FWP for directions and were authorized to remove all four. Control work is done.

On the 6<sup>th</sup>, WS investigated 2 injured calves on private land in the lower Ruby. WS confirmed that the injuries were from wolves and tracks were found in the area. FWP will increase monitoring in the area and visit the ranch.

On the 7<sup>th</sup>, one of the calves injured by wolves in the West Boulder south of Big Timber was euthanized.

On the 8<sup>th</sup>, Idaho WS notified FWP that SW64M was killed. The wolf had been implicated in cattle losses in the Leadore Idaho area.

On the 9<sup>th</sup>, efforts to remove two wolves from the Monitor Mountain pack were completed. FWP has increased monitoring efforts and is considering hazing the pack toward their summering area at higher elevations on public land.

On the 9<sup>th</sup>, WS continued investigating sheep losses in the East Fork of Blacktail Creek south of Dillon. Four additional sheep were either dead or will be euthanized. A total of 6 sheep were lost. WS efforts to collar and release any wolves caught in the area are ongoing.

On the 11<sup>th</sup>, WS confirmed that 1 or 2 wolves injured a calf on private land in the Big Hole valley west of Wisdom. The calf had to be euthanized. This is the second incident in this area in recent weeks. A calf was confirmed killed on an adjacent ranch on May 2nd. At least four wolves are believed to be in the area. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, WS killed 2 wolves from the air on private

property. When located, the wolves were feeding on a dead calf and a 2<sup>nd</sup> calf lay dead nearby. WS picked up the wolves later that afternoon and confirmed both calves had been killed by wolves. This brings the total to 4 calves that have been killed in this area over the past several weeks. FWP has authorized WS to remove the remaining 2 adults and the litter of pups. WS has traps in the area and is attempting to collar and release an adult first in order to determine whether there is a den nearby. If a den is found, the pups will be euthanized before the adults. SOS permits will be revoked during this trapping/collaring period.

On the 15<sup>th</sup>, WS killed a wolf from the Willow Creek as part of ongoing control authorized by FWP.

### **Outreach and Education Activities**

On the 16<sup>th</sup>, Bradley gave several short wolf talks to groups of kids from Seeley Lake participating in a farm tour near Helmville. About 60 kids.

### **Research Activities**

Nothing to report.

### **Law Enforcement Activities**

On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, FWP retrieved a dead wolf from the Helmville area. The carcass will be transported to the FWP lab in Bozeman and the case is under investigation.

On the 5<sup>th</sup>, a recently collared female in the Baker Mountain pack was found on mortality. The carcass was retrieved by FWP on May 9 and brought to the lab to determine cause of death.

### **Other**

Wolf Litigation: On May 8<sup>th</sup> Judge Malloy granted intervenor status to the State of Montana / Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. MT / FWP opposes the request for a preliminary injunction and submitted documents to the court on May 16<sup>th</sup>. The oral arguments about the request for a preliminary injunction will be heard May 29<sup>th</sup>.

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To learn more about Montana's recovered wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP at: [www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf](http://www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf).

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana / Columbus area at: 322-4303. Or call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call 1-800-TIP-MONT.

